

## **Working 24/7 – U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's Biologist Rescues Trapped Osprey**

While preparing for a day off recreational canoe trip, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Southwest Region Migratory Bird specialist Bob Murphy found himself on a Mothers Day avian rescue mission.

As Bob was getting his canoe ready, his friend Dale Stahlecker spotted an osprey hanging upside down, tangled in fishing line, way up in a nearby pine tree. Dale alerted Bob and the four hour rescue began.

Dale contacted some nearby friends who, in turn, began contacting others for help. State Park staff arrived and brought a ladder, but as luck would have it, the ladder was too short. A local utility worker offered a 50 foot expandable pole hoping it could be used to cut the fishing line, but again too short.

Bob realized he had to climb that tree or the osprey would die. So up he went while others gathered around the base of the tree with hopes of catching the bird if it should fall. Equipped with an ad-hoc climbing rig of rope, carabineers, harness and safety belaying lines Bob climbed for about 15 minutes. When he got to the osprey the bird began flapping in a futile effort to escape. Bob was able to grab her by the feet and began cutting the fishing line away from her body and feet. Once he had her free he gave her a quick once over checking for injuries, there were none visible except for some scrapping on one of her toes, and carefully placed her into a backpack where she quitted right down.

The trip back down the tree with the bird in the back pack only took about 5 minutes. Once on the ground, Bob and his friends took her to The Wildlife Center in Española, New Mexico, for a little rest and rehab. Last word was that, although she was somewhat dehydrated and malnourished, had a slightly injured toe and suffered neurological problems from hanging upside down for some time, she was improving. The hope is that if all goes well she will be able to be released in about a week.

Job well done Bob!